

**Washington DC —** The U.S. Navy is revising its overall fleet size requirement from 313 ships to 306 ships, according to a congressionally mandated report. U.S. Representative Duncan Hunter, a member of the House Armed Services Committee, expressed concerns with the Navy's plan for a smaller fleet.

"The U.S. Navy is already overworked and experiencing the consequences of an undersized fleet," said Representative Hunter. "The 306-ship target might represent the absolute minimum capacity the Navy needs right now, but cutting the fleet size today will have a long-term effect on the Navy's ability to project force on a global scale and defend American security interests worldwide.

"It wasn't long ago that an independent panel recommended a fleet of 346 ships. And last year, the Navy said it would need a fleet exceeding 500 ships to meet the full spectrum of its requirements. Understanding a fleet of 500 ships is unattainable, this target in particular underscores the dramatic difference in where the Navy needs to be in terms of size and where the Navy is actually heading.

"And while the Navy makes the point that this downsizing is the result of operational requirements, the decision should also send a clear warning about what's ahead in the event the Navy's budget tightens under sequestration, as well as the damage created by the lack of a coherent and forward-looking budget."